

The mental health challenges faced by LGBTQI migrants in Europe post migration in relation to the global LGBTQI rights agenda

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What's important about migrants who are from sexual and gender minorities?

The **UNHCR International Guidelines and Principles**

- Lists five grounds for granting asylum; race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, and political opinion, Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) based refugee claims are considered under the 'membership of a particular social group'
- 79 out of 193 UN member states criminalise same sex relationships and activity resulting in imprisonment and in some cases – death penalty
- Social, economic and political conditions that force migration are inseparable from homophobic and transphobic violence compelling migration (neither forced nor voluntary)
- LGBTQI migrants encounter multiple systemic inequalities that block their ability to deepen their community and political belonging

Yogyakarta Principles (2006; 2017)

- Situate the rights of LGBTQI refugee claims within international human rights laws
- Developed in response to reports of individuals being denied asylum due to their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression (ORAM, 2010).
- *Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution related to sexual orientation or gender identity. A State may not remove, expel or extradite a person to any State where that person may face a well-founded fear of torture, persecution, or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity*

Scoping Review: Main objectives

Critically
assess the state
of knowledge
about LGBTQI
migrants living
in Canada and
globally



Examine the extent, range and nature of qualitative literature

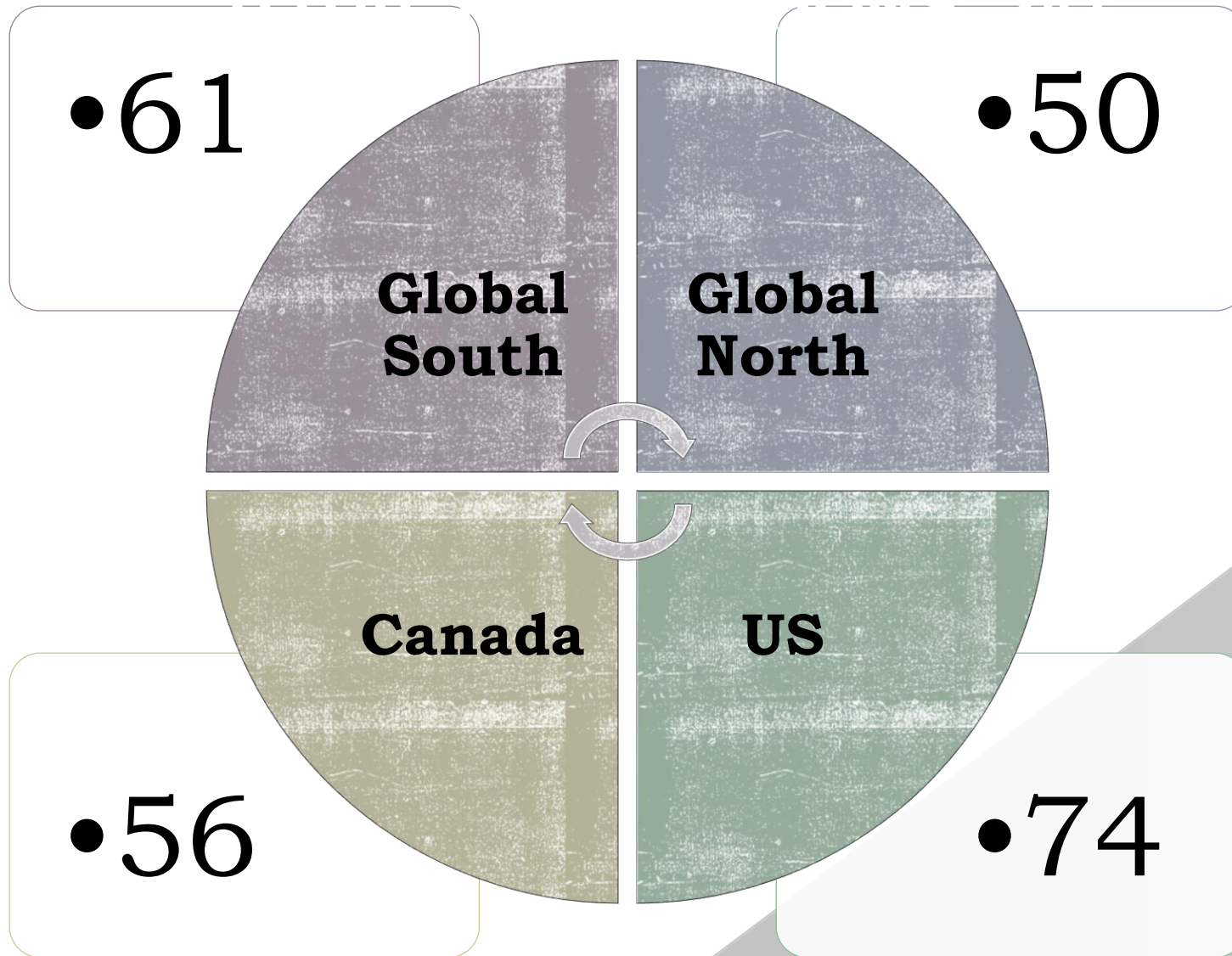
Map out key themes and tensions

Contrast and compare policy and practice implications

Identify knowledge strengths and gaps, key areas for future research

Assess links between literature about (1) LGBTQI people living in the Global South and (2) LGBTQI migrants living in Canada and Global North





Mental Health Challenges – LGBTQI migrants

This presentation uses selected findings from our scoping review with a focus on 2 key aspects from the Global North sections;

- The decision making process of claims for refuge based on membership of a ‘particular social group’ and the effects on mental health
- The impacts on mental health of multiple sources of discrimination experienced by asylum seekers/refugees living in Europe post migration

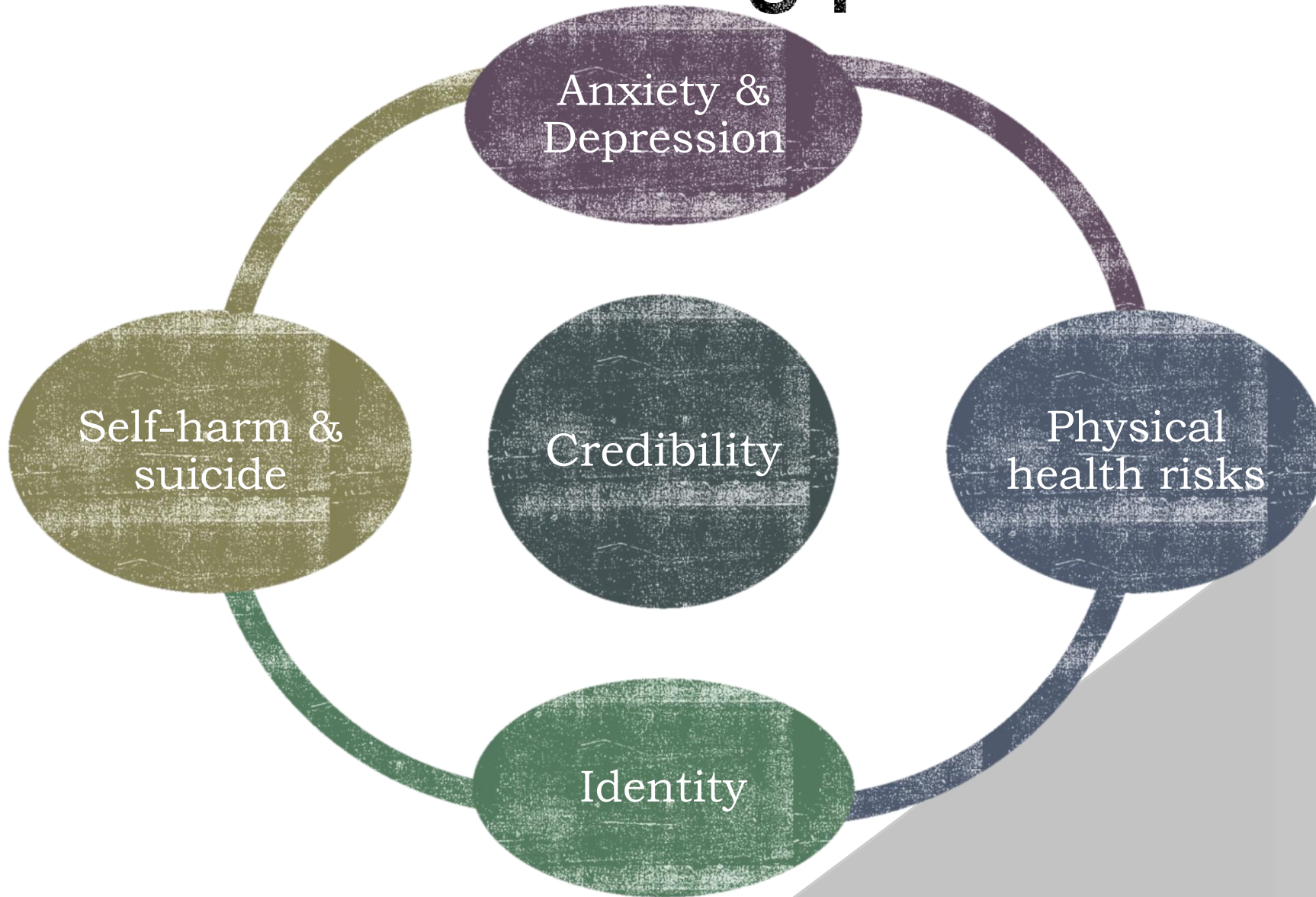
Pre-migration experiences

- LGBTQI people in the Global South encounter family, community and state-sanctioned homophobic and transphobic violence.
- Each country's economic (poverty, etc.) and political climate (civil unrest, militia, generalised violence, gendered violence and religious extremism) shapes how LGBTQI people are exposed to homophobic and transphobic violence (IGLHRC, 2014; ORAM, 2013)
- LGBTQI people frequently experienced restricted access to employment, education, housing, health and social care services.

Membership of a 'particular social group'

- In the UK just 24% of all asylum claims were granted in Q4 of 2017 (Refugee Council, 2018)
- For years LGBTQI people were told they could avoid persecution in their home countries by concealing their sexuality/gender – this can still occur in the **UK, Belgium** and **Bulgaria** – although other EU countries no longer apply this to decisions
- Criminalisation of homosexuality (80 countries) is not deemed sufficient level of persecution – applicant must still make a 'plausible case'
- Sexually explicit questions were found to be common in interviews of asylum seekers in UK, Belgium and Sweden – these are now prohibited
 - BUT – still use stereotyped questions both re: LGBTQI and country of origin

Decision making processes



Intersectionality of disadvantages

Family
exclusion
and
isolation

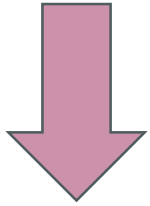
Prohibition
from work

Poverty

Exclusion
from
housing,
healthcare,
welfare

Post-migration experiences

- Isolation from host society due to refugee/asylum status
- Isolation from other refugees/asylum seekers due to gender identity or sexuality



High rates of
problematic
alcohol and/or
drug use



Experiences of
violence and
abuse from
both groups



High levels of
PTSD –
compounded by
lack of social
support

Recommendations

- Early stages of arrival are a crucial time to ensure equitable access to health and social services for LGBTQI newcomers
- Mental health services need to apply a trauma-informed approach and recognise the effects of childhood trauma on how LGBTQI migrants navigate their realities post migration
- Training for the full range of service providers to increase awareness of the multiple barriers faced by LGBTQI migrants
- Development of strategies for empathetic interactions with LGBTQI migrants across domains.

Project website and Project team



The state of knowledge about LGBTQI migrants living in Canada and global LGBTQI rights

This scoping review was supported by a knowledge synthesis grant awarded to the research team by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The research team is comprised of professors, students and research assistants located at the Université de Montréal in Montreal, Quebec, Canada and Middlesex University in London, UK. Situated primarily within social work related disciplines, team members engage in participatory, social justice and equity-oriented research and advocacy.

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- Research coordinator: Olivia Kamgain
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<http://www.migrants-lgbtqi.ca>



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